

You have just entered the heavy oak front door and walked along the brick-floored passageway into the hall house. Doors led off the passageway into the backyard, a pantry and a buttery, where food, wine butts and ale casks were stored. Food was prepared and cooked in an outhouse in the backyard.

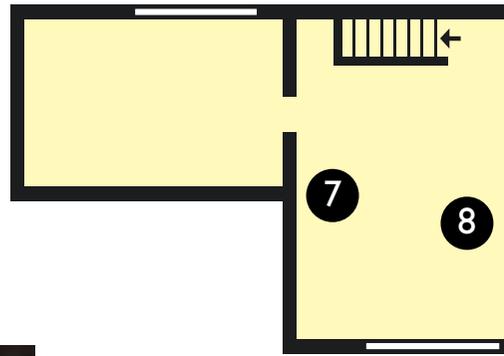
The impressive full height hall, with a central fireplace and elaborately carved beams and windows, was the centre of the house. It was used for business and as a dining space for the family and their servants.

At the west end of the hall there was probably a door into the private rooms used by the master and his family. These rooms, known as the solar wing, may have consisted of a ground floor room with two bedrooms above.

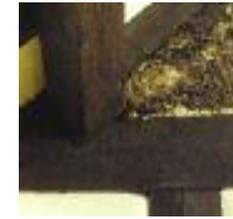
Additions and improvements were made to the house in the 16th century. Fireplaces and brick chimneys were added, reducing smoke in the rooms. A first floor was created. Reached by a ladder, it provided new living quarters for the family. The inglenook fireplace was added in the late 17th century, allowing cooking to safely take place indoors.

Today only part of the hall house remains. The front half of the solar wing has been demolished and the service end is now part of the neighbouring property. Cottages have been built in front of the service and solar wings.

A model, similar to the original hall house



FIRST FLOOR



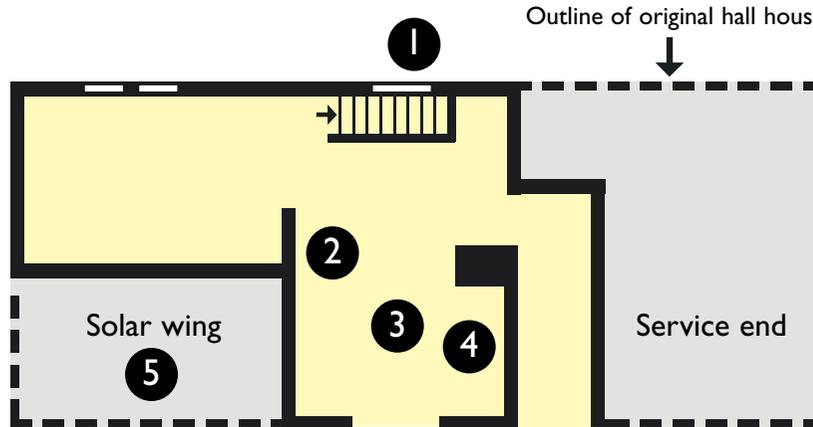
7 The scorched marks on the wall show where smoke from the open hearth escaped through a hole in the roof.



8 The impressive upstairs fireplace indicates that this 16th century room may have been used as living quarters by the family.



1 Wooden, mullioned window. Originally the windows reached the ground of the central hall. Shutters provided protection from the weather and starched cloth let in the light.



GROUND FLOOR



3 The fire pit in the centre of the hall provided warmth for the occupants. It was rediscovered during the building's restoration in the 1980s.



2 The holes in the timber indicate where a raised bench was once attached. The bench, facing the open hearth, provided comfort for the master and his family and indicated their higher status.

5 The solar wing was a private space for the master and his family.



4 The inglenook fireplace was added to the house in the late 17th century. Cooking could now be done inside the house.

6 The modern extension replaced a 19th century antiques shop belonging to the Toovey family, shown here on the right-hand side.





Picture by Buckinghamshire Examiner

Chris Wallis made specialist repairs to the building

## Restoration

By 1982 the 500 year old hall house was badly in need of conservation and restoration. Chiltern

District Council intervened to prevent its collapse. The Amersham Society raised enough money to buy the house and attached shop in 1985.

Specialist repairs were carried out by Chris Wallis, son of the famous wartime inventor Barnes Wallis. Much of the restoration work was done by volunteers. The museum

opened to the public in 1991 and was awarded the prestigious National Heritage Museum of the Year 'Shoestring' award in 1993.

The garden was transformed into an attractive herb garden, filled with plants with medicinal properties.



Picture by Buckinghamshire Examiner



## History of the occupants

Since records began in 1613, 49 High Street has been occupied by just two families, the Hunts and the Tooveys.

Thomas Hunt was a maltster and the house remained in his family until 1847.

The main hall and remaining solar wing was then occupied by Henry Toovey, a furniture broker. By 1891 his son, Frederick, was running an antiques business in a shop he had built in front of the house. His son, Ronald Frank Toovey, continued the business and lived in the main house until his death in 1982.



## Visiting the Museum

School parties and pre-booked groups are welcome to visit the museum and enjoy guided walks outside normal opening hours.

There is a regular programme of creative activities for families and adults.

## Guided Walks from the Museum

**Town walks** (1 1/2 hrs). Adults £2, under 16s free  
April to October, Sundays 2.30pm

**Martyrs walks** (2 hrs). Adults £2, under 16s free  
April to Sept, last Saturday of the month 2.30pm

## Opening Times and Prices

### March to October

Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays  
2pm – 4.30pm

### Also from May to September

Wednesdays and Thursdays 2pm – 4.30pm  
£2 adults, under 16s free

49 High Street, Amersham, HP7 0DP  
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[www.AmershamMuseum.org](http://www.AmershamMuseum.org)

# A Tudor Hall House



Welcome to this Tudor hall house, built around 1480. Its size, quality and proximity to the Market Square indicates that it probably belonged to a wealthy merchant.

The timber-framed house had a full height hall made from locally felled oak. There was a service end on the east side and an upstairs solar wing on the west side, with private quarters for the master and his family.

Today, after careful restoration you can appreciate much of the original building and the many modifications made through the centuries.



Cover illustration: Val Biro